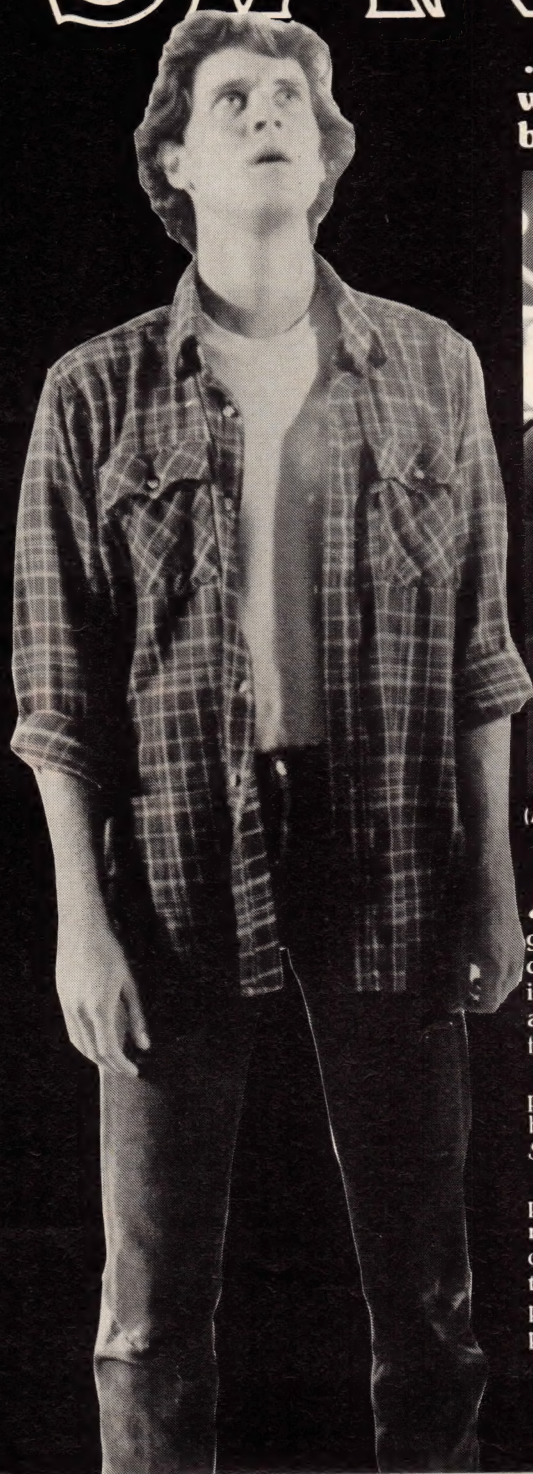


The adventure of a lifetime is about to begin  
for . . . . .

# THE LAST STARFIGHTER

. . . in a major new science-fiction fantasy  
where special effects and computer graphics  
bring to life aliens, space battles and heroics



(Above and left) Lance Guest as the earthling recruited to become a starfighter

**A**CCORDING to film producer Gary Adelson, those obsessed with playing video space games (or 'arcade' games as the buffs call them) all have one secret dream in common. It's to be swept away to another galaxy to fight a space battle for real.

At least that's exactly what happens in Adelson's exciting and light-hearted movie adventure *The Last Starfighter*.

The storyline is fairly simple. A powerful armada of interstellar marauders is about to attack a league of peaceful planets which, in an attempt to defend themselves, have placed video game machines on planets throughout the galaxy with

the sole intention of recruiting select players to become their Starfighters.

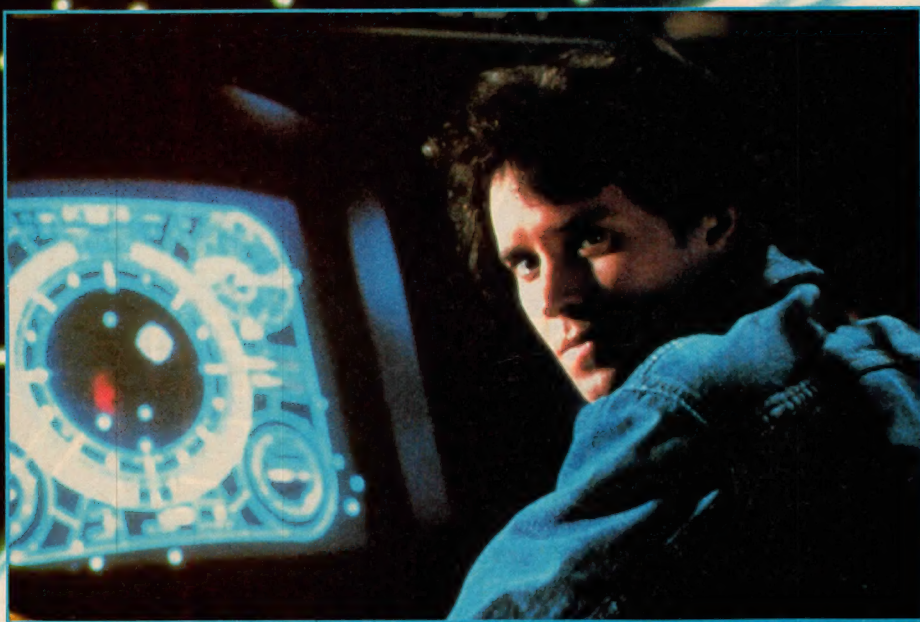
Co-producer Edward Denault says: "I think you could summarise this picture as an electronic, science-fiction fairytale; a kind of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table in space."

Among these newly-recruited space-age knights is an unsuspecting Earthling played by newcomer Lance Guest, who describes his character, Alex, as a kid whose potential is stifled by the staid environment of the caravan park in which he lives.

"He wants to move on and make something of himself," says Guest. "When he suddenly finds himself whisked off Earth, out of a realm in

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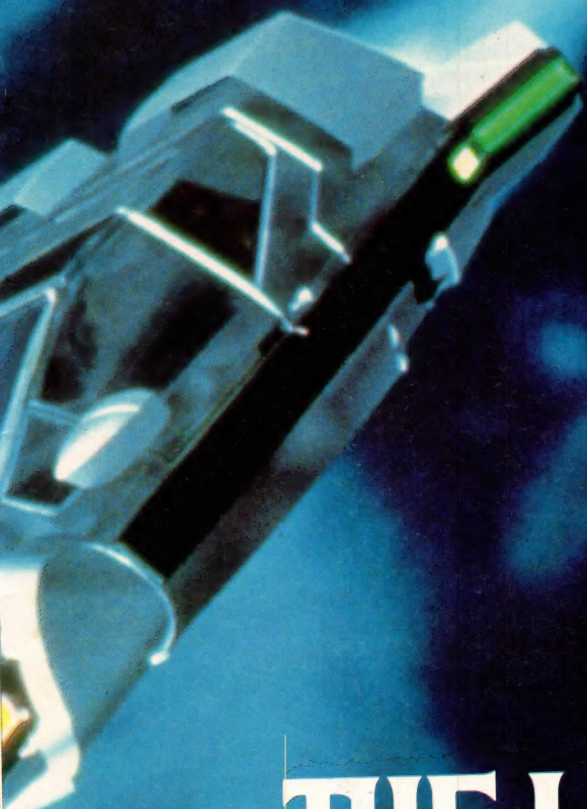


(Right) An unrecognisable Dan O'Herlihy as the Gun Star navigator, Grig; (above inset) Lance Guest on the video machine that tests his skill as a prospective starfighter

which he knows what reality is, every single thing amazes him.

"Yet, with all the excitement of being a Starfighter and flying about the universe, there is still present the honest, human emotion, the fear and the wanting to return home to his family. Being a hero for Alex, while fun, isn't all that easy."





(Above) Robert Preston as the alien scalawag Centauri; (left) the Star Car Centauri uses to zip around the galaxy

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The 23-year-old actor was cast in the film's starring role after director Nick Castle had spotted him in the horror film *Halloween II*.

"He possessed all the qualities I wanted the character to express on screen," said Castle, "a kind of innocence, shyness, yet determination. Also, Lance was able to play a

dual role within the same scene — that of his own character, and that of the substitute robot double sent to cover Alex's absence on Earth. It takes a good actor like Lance to create that fine line which differentiates the one from the other."

As Centauri, the persuasive and rather unscrupulous alien rogue who

recruits Guest as a Starfighter, Robert Preston was the first and only choice. The film provided the actor, whose versatility and vitality has spanned a 46-year career, with just the change of pace he had been looking for.

"What attracted me most about Centauri was his character: an outrageous con-man from outer space, an alien rascal in human disguise who relishes in his scalawagging and masquerading. In one scene I even get the chance to take off my human face and expose my alien being. I've never been in a picture of this genre before, but *The Last Starfighter* has given me the chance to play to an entirely different audience than I have in my previous films."

The key role of Grig, Lance Guest's Gun Star navigator, went to another movie veteran, Dan O'Herlihy.

"It's a delicious character," remarks the jovial Irish actor. "I play

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a 'humaned' alien with an iguana look — a cross between George Patton and a well-bred Englishman. I'm completely masked throughout the film as this lizard-type creature, and the only thing recognisable about me is my voice."

Apart from young Guest, the rest of the Starfighters are made up of an intriguing array of aliens brought to life by make-up expert Terry Smith. He was assigned to the film by production designer Ron Cobb — noted for the aliens he created for *Star Wars*. Together they worked on the various creatures for the new space fantasy.

"We had to make an enormous amount of aliens, especially for the Star League assembly scene," Cobb explains.

"Most of our main characters required very specialised appearances. Our appliances are not just simple rubber masks, they are complicated and complex mechanisms. If they

were to have any semblance of reality, they had to have muscle, tentacle, eye and mouth movement. Terry Smith is one of the few artists in this business with the talent and expertise to create such authenticity."

As for special effects, the marvels of deep space have been created not with miniature props and trick photography, but by computer graphics even more advanced than those pioneered on *Tron*.

In this film, 230 individual scenes — including those which feature Centauri's 'Star Car', Lance Guest's 'Gun Star' and the Xurian enemy fleet —

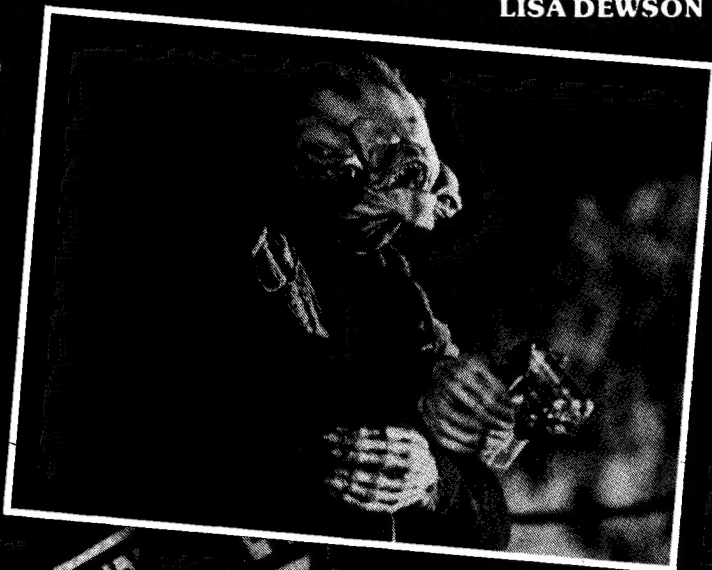
have been realised via a revolutionary new process known as Digital Scene Simulation<sup>sm</sup>.

By integrating the computer simulation scenes with special effects and conventional photography, it was hoped the film would be given a unique and atmospheric 'look' that would "truly give the viewer a sense of being in space."

Clearly the film-makers feel they have achieved their aim. Producer Edward Denault claims that with *The Last Starfighter*: "We have something very special. It has a wonderful and incredible magic all of its own."

**LISA DEWSON**

(Right) An alien recruit; (below) Lance Guest with Catherine Mary Stewart as his girlfriend



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